

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJ: MORE VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL COURSE AHEAD

REF: MADRID 7572

1. ENRIQUE DE LA MATA, THE IMPORTANT SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND A LEADER OF SILVA MUNOZ' CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (UDE) POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, TOLD ME YESTERDAY HE FAVORED A NEW BROAD-BASED CABINET WITH A NEW PRIME MINISTER TO SET SPAIN ON THE COURSE OF POLITICAL PLURALISM. JUAN CARLOS' POLITICAL STOCK WOULD NEVER BE HIGHER THAN AT THE FIRST MOMENTS OF HIS RULE. FOR PERSONAL AND POLITICAL REASONS ARIAS SHOULD NOT BE RETAINED. ON THE PERSONAL SIDE IT WOULD SEEM STRANGE FOR JUAN CARLOS TO RETAIN ARIAS WHEN IT WAS HIS CABINET WHICH HAD BANNED THE PRINCE'S FATHER FROM SPAIN. POLITICALLY ARIAS, DESPITE HIS VIRTUES, HAD ALREADY SHOWN THAT HE WAS INCAPABLE OF MOVING AHEAD WITH HIS OWN FEBRUARY LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IN A COMPLEX POLITICAL SITUATION.

2. DE LA MATA -- IN WHAT SEEMED TO US A RATHER UTOPIAN FORMULATION -- SUGGESTED THIS NEW CABINET BE SO BROAD AS TO INCLUDE EVERYONE EXCEPT COMMUNISTS AND ULTRA-ULTRA RIGHTISTS (BLAS PINAR). THIS GOVT SHOULD INCLUDE MEN AS DIVERSE AS GIRON (THE SYMBOL OF THE "BUNKER"), THE LEFT-WING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC RUIZ GIMENEZ AND FELIPE GONZALEZ OF THE PSOE.

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THIS THEORY BEGS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SUCH MEN COULD BE

SHOE-HORNED INTO THE SAME ROOM AND WHETHER THE PSOE WOULD ABANDON THE POSITION EXPRESSED TO ME BY GONZALEZ THAT IT DID NOT WANT TO SERVE IN A TRANSITION GOVT BUT SIMPLY WANTED THE GOS TO OPEN UP THE POLITICAL PROCESS AFTER WHICH THE PSOE WOULD TAKE ITS CHANCES IN FREE ELECTIONS.

3. DE LA MATA DID MAKE THE POINT THAT AGREEMENT ON A FUNDAMENTAL COURSE OF ACTION AND THE GENERAL MAKE UP OF A BROAD-BASED CABINET WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ALMOST HYSTERICAL MANEUVERING OVER WHO SHOULD HEAD THE CABINET. IN HIS OWN VIEW THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD COME FROM AMONG THOSE ACCEPTABLE TO THE OLD REGIME AND HE TENDED TO EXCLUDE SILVA MUNOZ AND INCLUDE FRAGA IN THIS FORMULATION.

4. JUAN CARLOS, HE SAID, HAD BEEN DRIVEN SOMEWHAT TO DIS-TRACTION BY THE CONFLICTING ADVICE HE WAS GETTING AND HAD NOW SHUT OFF HIS READY ACCESS TO SO MANY PEOPLE IN ORDER TO THINK. IN HIS VIEW, JUAN CARLOS COULD SET THE COURSE OF LIBERALIZATION BUT THEREAFTER WOULD HAVE TO REIGN - LEAVING THE OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS TO THE GOVT - OR HAZARD THE THRONE.

5. INTERESTINGLY, WE HAVE A REPORT FROM WELL-KNOWN NEWSMAN FROM THE MONARCHIST "ABC" THAT "CORTES" AND COUNCIL OF THE REALM PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL HAS ABANDONED TEMPORARILY HIS AMBITIONS TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER AND HAS SWUNG AROUND TO ARIAS, PRESUMABLY IN THE BELIEF HE COULD ASSURE RETENTION OF HIS OWN "CORTES" POWER BASE. WHEN THE ARIAS TRANSITION PERIOD COMES TO A CLOSE, RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL MIGHT THEN HAVE A GOOD SHOT AT RUNNING THE COUNTRY. IT STRIKES US THAT THE RETENTION OF BOTH ARIAS AND THE QUITE CONSERVATIVE RODRIGUEZ DE VALCARCEL WOULD BE READ AT HOME AND ABROAD THAT LITTLE HAD CHANGED.
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